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PEGGY BENNETT:

Snowy Robes

Eunice was big-boned and dark-eyed. She had a map of pendulous skin on her throat which was like the dewlap of some big Bossy roaming a dusty meadow of white country, and her black hair was a knoll of shining silk. She was thirty, and she swept the grinding stone slabs of the front walk as if she expected them one day to become clean.

Salubria, South Carolina, was a Baptist town. For instance, on Sunday Eunice spent four hours at the church house in Sunday School, Training Union, and the Morning and Evening Services, and on Monday afternoons she taught the Sunbeams, and on Wednesday nights she played the piano for prayer meetings in the church auditorium.

This morning the Baptist pastor had stood on the steps at eight-thirty, his face caught in a sleeve of light. His shirt and his soiled white duck trousers were brilliant, but he was wearing putty grey sneakers. "Oh, Miss Eunice!" he hollered. "Would you step out here a minute, please, Ma'am?"

Only twenty-seven, and his boyish face whitened by chronic illness, he was the kind of obsessed spirit who drove himself into nervous breakdowns, smiling his famished smile and talking cheerily. His dark hair glistened oilily. "I just wanted to tell you, Miss Eunice," he said staccato, as his wavering black eyes found hers and stopped on them, "that we, ah, after praying the night through and talking quietly with the Lord, that, ah, Judge Sheip, while the dawn was like one of Mrs. Blumquist's glorious roses, ah, consented to run for gover-

nor of our state under the auspices of our Lord and Savior." He glowed. To keep his spirit boiling, he must wage aggressive Christianity. And he sincerely believed a fight against rotten politics would keep him lean and fit.

Haltingly he added, "We hope all our good church folk will unite to work with us."

"'If I'd only had my coffee," Eunice thought dolefully, feeling like a sloth. "It's time a clean man entered politics," she said aloud. "I don't think our people can do anything to defeat that other crowd, but, well, we can try, we can lend our hearts and our hands."

He stroked his lyric widow's peak with an erratic hand and smiled wanly. "Yes, it'll be a stiff fight. The devil has his opposition lined up all over the state."

Bitterly he burst out, "Miss Eunice, the devil will be fighting us until the millennium. Neither he nor we will ever win in this life!" He licked his lips haggardly. "Well, I must be running along now." He caressed the thin wings of his pathologically sinused nose. "I've got to, ah, call a meeting of our senior deacons in the interests of the Lord. Then, ah, this afternoon I'm going to address our Young Christian Businessmen's League in order to line up as many of them as possible on the Lord's side. I, ah, I thought you would like to know, Miss Eunice. You've been one of our most faithful, you know. Yes, indeed, I hate to bother you all the time when there are others who ought to jump at the chance of doing a little for the Lord for a change, but — no rest for the weary, is there?" He smiled pitifully. "You must give my love to your wonderful mother, God bless her soul. And pray for us. If everybody would get together among themselves and do a little earnest praying, we could lick this thing."

"He leads a hard life," Eunice thought numbly, as he went off down the stony walk and over the brink of the cement escarpment where stone stairs lay in wait.

"Is there anything the matter?" spoke Mama, muffled in the hall darkness.

"Oh, Mama," said the thirty-year-old girl, "Judge Sheip is going to run for governor. Don't you remember I told you I dreamt something wonderful was going to happen this week?" Eunice went through the damp shadowy house singing, "Wonderful Words of Life."

The slow day had begun to revolve. Like a poet, she daydreamed over the breakfast table. She daydreamed that she stole through the lofty dim vestibule, through the great heavy doors into the illusory vastness of the church auditorium, to submerge deep into prayer. She

daydreamed that she was discovered in the chilly Holy of Holies by no one less than Judge Sheip, who had been making a tour of unforward places in the interests of the people and who had been tempted to this spiritual oasis like one of God's camels.

He had never seen anything as amazing and heartening as that scene! (And he had known a thousand episodes involving women of deep maturity.) It was as if a vast beam had tipped from heaven to rest its end here on the earthly shape of this pure unearthly woman. As the Judge stood leaning, resting his forearms across the back of the last row of seats, and mapping his most profound campaign speech around this event, she slowly brought her eyes up to a level —

A dissonant old voice inquired, "Where are those old scissors I've been using to clip the chickens' wings?"

"Oh, they're there, right under your nose!" Raped, Eunice rushed forth from the room, leaving a tiny wrinkled woman with a downcast mouth and stooped shoulders.

"I didn't know, Hon," the old woman murmured dazedly as she mournfully took the rusty and broken-tipped scissors from the wooden table.

Shaking her head in bewilderment as she turned away from the parlor mantel mirror, Eunice murmured, "I don't know what gets into me, to make me act that way! I guess it's old Satan, but I just can't seem to help myself."

It was a sunshiny day in September, both hot and cold in the same breath. She wore a loose sweater in the house, but she would have roasted out in the tomato patch. Everybody said the weather was unusual, and every year the weather was unusual.

Yawning, and remembering the sooty porch, she fished a broom from the hall closet and went outside into the vast bubble of daylight. The trees twittered feverishly, and cool winds swept the ground.

There came over her she knew not what. She had eaten no lotus bloom, smoked no opium. In the past she had had recurrent spells of malaria, but had suffered no overdoses of quinine. Yet she was *loco* in a nauseating way. She had one of those unmentionable daydreams which plagued her with hideous delights.

How could she ever tell this to any one of the healthy people who come and go with such pomp and aplomb, owning the earth? Unwilling to imagine scenes of nastiness with the male sex, with which she had had so little to do, she imagined depraved mutilations of beautiful young girls, and it was as if she ravished herself. These were the love affairs she never had.

Shuddering, she finished the last greedy remnant in a pendulum swing to revulsion at her own cruel stupidity. Bitter because she had fallen, as easily as a trull, into this peculiar salacious dreaming, she walked slowly down to the edge of the embankment and paused to watch the metal automobiles rush by down on the thoroughfare. Flashing their lightning and squealing their brakes, they too possessed the glitter of evil, in several speeds. As they roared past, she felt their attractive forces bulge her side like lunar tides. Things she had never seen, places she would never go, life she had missed somehow, beckoned to her.

Wearily she turned and went up the walk. She scraped the rubber soles of her flat oxfords on the mat, as she had done a thousand times before, and banged the screen door behind her.

She ushered herself through the dark hall, flashing her eyes balefully. She opened the shutters on the sitting room, and the dark wooden chairs and cabinets appeared, hushed, like burnt meteors under doilies. She saw the old-fashioned dark oval portraits on the walls, photographs of a man and woman who had lived here formerly. Hair of head, moustache, and sideburns were pencil-lead gray, and the pearly skins possessed the pallor of the embalmed before cosmetics. And because these objects symbolized her life, all that she owned, they broke her heart.

There were soft footsteps coming quickly through the tunneling hall. Mama appeared in the doorway. She wavered when she saw Eunice, remembering Eunice's scorching of an hour ago. "Three eggs," she said, holding the thin white becackled triumphs in gnarled brown hands.

"That's wonderful, Mama," Eunice said slowly. The little woman's powdered and wrinkled face broke into a girlish smile of satisfaction which contrasted pleasantly with her black brows and smutty white hair. The wrinkles ran in parallel and curving currents over her lean face, and her shrunken flanks trembled as she became lively. Innocently she deposited the eggs, to which flecks of excrement and feathers still clung, in a cut glass dish on the black marble coffee table and pattered out.

Eunice started to scream at her. Instead she stood in a stupor of restraint. Sadness startled her face as she leaned her head against the door casing and thought coaxingly, "But we get along pretty well after all, don't we?"

"Eunice," Mama was calling from the front porch, "step here a minute." Mama was peering strenuously at the billboards high across

the four-laned concourse. Like banners of great medieval houses they hid the naked spaces of the virgin sky, parading the trade names of great industries. Ford's Mercury, Wheaties, and Pabst Blue Ribbon were pasted huge against the blue. Portraits of cute people with overripe skins were splashed on white spaces of paper.

"The little monkeys," said Mama with grim satisfaction. Two small boys had climbed the green latticework (the great cliff) which supported the billboards and had penciled moustaches, goatees, and Henry the Eighth curly beards on all that flushed paper flesh (and then they were smugglers, robber barons, poetic vagabonds . . .).

Mama could not hide her pleasure. "When we first moved here there were rows of elms up and down this whole section of highway. I'll never forget the day they cut them down. I wanted to beat the whole lot of them."

"Oh, Mama, you make me sick," Eunice crabbed in her hidden place. "I've heard all this a thousand times." Aloud she said, "I'm glad they don't belong to me, the little devils!" Then she stood silent and formidable. Their pelvises touched the bannister. Eunice inserted a hand between her dress and soft milk skin to pull her slip strap over her shoulder. "She'll get worse as she gets older," she thought bleakly, "and there's nothing I can do."

Neither heard the screeching bicycle brakes on the sidewalk below; neither saw the messenger boy appear at the top of the stone steps and walk rapidly toward them up their own flagstones with a mealygum sound of shoe on stone. "Telegram for Miss Montgomery," he announced guiltily. Nervously he showed Eunice where to sign. He turned and leaped down the steps, feeling compulsions to prove that he was something other than what he appeared to be, a downybearded adolescent.

Cowering, Eunice felt the pale yellow envelope so light in her hand. Little Mama hovered behind a Corinthian column anxiously. "Oh, my Lord, my Lord!" Eunice whispered, having discovered long ago that any news was bad news so far as she was concerned. No tickets to Paradise. She tore the envelope with such clumsy hands it fluttered off the porch like a broken wing.

They read it about three times apiece, waiting for glimmers of comprehension to light the dark attics of their staggering brains. MARY FAILING RAPIDLY. NEED EUNICE. ALL LOST. GABRIEL. Stupidly the old woman touched it with her fingers, trying to read sense into it with them. It was so bizarre a thing.

They went wheeling hastily into the house, chariots reconnoitering,

and bumping each other resoundingly.

They began to argue. "You going to go?" said the old woman with a frightened face.

"Oh, yes," cursed Eunice. She lamented, "But what can *I* do!"

"You ought to go and look after little Cornel, poor little mite," Mama suggested.

"Why can't some of her people look after him?" scowled Eunice, contemplating the unknown. "Besides," she wheedled, "I can't leave you here alone."

"Now, Hon," the old woman pleaded, "look at it this way. He's your brother and he's my son. You ought to go for our sakes. Poor boy." She began to sniff a prelude to tears. "Such a funny telegram," she sobbed.

"Now, Mama! You needn't worry! I'm going," spat Eunice, and began to feel ashamed of her peevishness. What would the young Baptist preacher think of her behavior? What would Judge Sheip!

Having righted herself in the eyes of God and man she began to feel relieved, yea, enthusiastic. Her body quivered like chugged banjoes, and a voice in her sang like a cello. She hurried about, trembling, afraid, and wildly happy. "I'll go get Nina to stay with you," she called.

The old woman went to the kitchen sink and absent-mindedly washed and, repeatedly, washed her hands with laundry soap. Grief for Gabriel, who had left her for another woman, made her ache. "We useta have such good times," she whispered, "and now my boy's been hurt!" The house rang hollow. Young boys are so beautiful. Then they get hurt.

Nina was an old Negro woman who had lived a long time in an old blackened stove of a house in the white section of town. She was very calumnious when she talked about other "niggers." Her neighbors did not mind her smoky skin much as long as she could be depended on in sickness, birth, death, and bridge parties. "Be glad to, Miss Eunice," she said.

Eunice too had adored Gabriel in his early youth and the house's manless state, adored even in a physical way, wanting always to hang around him, drape herself upon him, until he became stuck in a defensive attitude like a statue. Now he was a stranger to her, and she suspected that he was a stranger to her mother also, though Mama gave no sign of being bad hurt. Still, sometimes Eunice imagined that Mama too longed to kidnap him back from Mary, who did not share him. Mama knew a saying: "A son's a son until he gets him a wife.

A daughter's a daughter all her life." Eunice thought bitterly, "Yes, a son's a privileged character all right."

Photographs of Gabriel stood, hung, sat, lay, burrowed, everywhere. Mary and Cornel, *Mary's* son, were sitting in smiling unreal miniature on the parlor mantel. Coming in from the alley and the back steps, Eunice caught sight of three little photos of Gabriel stuck like postage stamps around the edge of the hall mirror on the grotesque, thronelike, carved halltree.

Beyond them she caught sight of her own large startled face, a fat moon disgusting them. "You're homely," she thought sadly. "Gabriel never loved you, you were so homely. He was ashamed of you, and it wasn't your fault." And narrowly and belatedly, she hated all the beautiful girls she had never known. Coddled for a grace they did not earn, they must find life easy! Passionately she ascended the stairs to pack.

She came down again in a few minutes. As she pushed steadily through the swinging door to the kitchen, she caught sight of her little aged dwarf of a mother feebly patting a wet blackened hoof of a pot with a clean towel. Usually this made Eunice fume and fret, but today she did not care. She was leaving this house and its weathers, this mouldering atmosphere, and a secret, dynamic Eunice was being reborn.

"Mama," she said impulsively, "is it all right if I get a new hat to go with my silk print?"

Every month the pension came on the dot, and it was enough, and they banked part of it, and they never lacked the necessities, but while they ate A & P cake every day, they thought they were starving. There was never enough money, they thought.

"Honey," said the little old girl, beginning to palpitate and speak in a hesitant manner which was a kind of cunning, "I don't know." She said the words slowly, wiping her wet hands on the dish rag thoroughly — another habit which oppressed the finicky daughter. Eunice felt herself turning into murderous fodder.

The old woman waited in silence, then continued mildly, uncertainly, "Honey, I think, well, I'm just afraid, if you've got something else you *could* wear, well I just don't see how, you know what the gas bill, and the meat bill, why that was a scandal! Hon, don't you think we'd better go slow?"

Too full of wrath even to gobble, Eunice turned her back, darted off through the swinging door, dining hall, hallway. Up the stairway, through the second hallway, into her bedroom. She slammed a door

so loud the house trembled. "Old bitch!" she whispered hysterically. "Chinchy old bitch!" And she lay down across the squeaking bed to dissolve her aches in tears.

Alone down in the kitchen, the old woman was suddenly afraid. Had she crucified living flesh? Had she wounded the mortal soul? Life was too brief; why hammer nails into the soft fiber of those about to die? She had taken up a butcherknife to chop chuck steak. She dropped the butcherknife and ran to the newel post to listen intently.

Swiftly she clambered up the stairway. "Hon," she called, tapping softly at the closed door. She turned the doorknob and stuck her frowzled little head through the crack. Eunice lay on her back, salty tears running down into the corners of her lips and grief pulsing in her throat. "Hon, buy your hat! Take whatever money you want, and buy you a hat!"

So as the rose of time grew brown, frying to a close, Eunice went out lugging a heavy suitcase into the white afternoon sunlight. She wore a new crownless black straw hat just delivered and felt reckless and flurried. Was it a mistake? Spending money hurt. The taxi had drawn up to the curb below the embankment and hooted petulantly. Mama was in tears, her soft wrinkled face drooping with suffering, her shoulders full of stoop. For a moment she couldn't speak for spasm.

"Take care of yourself, Hon," the old woman finally whispered, huskily. "Kiss my boy for me. Oh, the day! I never thought I'd live to see the day!"

Eunice felt heavy as a damp sheet. She climbed laboriously, sorrowing, down the stone steps. As the taxi drew away, she looked back, but Mama had vanished. "I love you," she thought, wishing that they were telepathic so that the lonely little figure might receive this message.

Thus, instead of that communion, Eunice saw a blinding specter, the huge soiled house built by a banker fifty years dead. Morbidly Eunice noted its sagging shingles, the nearness to a highway, the thousands of little splits in the wood of the silverish grey Roman Corinthian columns on the porch, and the grey pink walls which seemed composed of thousands of puffy biscuits mortared in layers like catacombs.

"I'll die in that old wreck," she thought. And where the sunlight struck it, the stricken mottled building seemed to possess a ghastly sheen.

She fell back on the lap of the taxi, pulling her gloves on plump but tapering fingers, and she heaved a mighty sigh as she thought, "Who knows? This change may do me good."

She bought her ticket and boarded the high blue Greyhound full of strangers, most of whom were paupers. She soon became reacquainted with the countryside: brilliant gleaming white funeral homes, Southern tearooms, orange filling stations, Negro dark towns, small crumby hotels, trees and plowed fields, and the life of the lowland world.

She went into dirty waiting rooms, used filthy toilets without lowering onto the seats, ate cheap thin sandwiches in the lunch rooms, drank milk out of greasy-looking glasses with paper straws, and watched clocks. She talked with impoverished-looking seatmates, mused, and let time pass.

Eunice arrived in Asheville on a darkening evening when it was turning cold, and there was a smell of cold in the air. The late sun seemed to be turning its back as it flickered out of sight through tiny trees topping hills yellow brown and barren. As the bus tumbled on hilly roads, the air looked like the depths of a thick and dusty glass jar. Then the houses of the residential sections confronted her.

The magnificence of the tawdry and profane old town caught her up. It was old, cold, and Biblical. The mountaineers in blue overalls thronged the streets with silent weatherworn faces. They seemed to form a tribe based on tacit understandings. The little girl whores slung soup and hash over counters, their small eyes weary, their cheeks flushed and chapped with cold beneath the crude rouge, and artificial flowers collecting the grease and dandruff of their ruined, frizzled hair.

The bus lumbered on jack-knifed streets past curious pink and green roofed buildings which boasted elevators, through the slummy approaches to the city. The nubbed earth spread on beyond, the distant mountain ridges mysteriously blue. Eunice had the quakes of excitement in the pit of her abdomen. It was as queer and romantic to her as Tibet — she had traveled so little.

She came rapidly to earth again when she saw Gabriel's queer-smiling bespectacled face outside the bus window. Her Tibetan brother. The incognito missionary gazed at him without optimism as the bus rolled into inertia.

He wore a Navy surplus overcoat and carried his grey felt hat cupped over his fly. He paced alongside the bus as it edged gingerly to the curb, the motored magic carpet coming at last to rest. She was in the first tight bunch of spilled personalities, not because she was eager, but because she was pushed. He kissed her with the cool rosette of his pale lips on her stale-scented powdered cheek.

As he steered her stoically past the small mobbed station to his car, she wondered if Gabriel loved anyone, even Mary, who had carried his

child like a little ton high in the wall of her abdomen. Could he love anyone?

"Is Mary better, Gabriel?" she asked in a low voice, wondering why he could not volunteer information like any thoughtful, civil man.

"Why, yes," he muttered, thrusting his arm out the window. "She does seem a little better." He leaned forward to jerk the key out of the ignition as he stalled the car on the hump of the driveway.

His grotesque display of emotion in the telegram, so unlike Gabriel, had fascinated Eunice. Whether he was choking with rage or laughing his tortured laugh, he usually seemed to be experiencing the same emotion, a monotonous saturninity. But that one wild cry of despair was like the great geological upheavals deep in the earth. Eunice had been touched.

"We got your telegram this morning," she said. He looked at her blankly. "Oh, yes," he remembered in humdrum tones. Her morale sank sharply. Between them there could be no understandings. He would not extend himself toward her. She watched him uneasily as he rolled up windows and slammed the cardoors locked.

The front porch was noisy with leaves. Inside the chairs and divan looked as if several stones off the mountains had come visiting and sat on them. Cornel's arsenal and other toys were strewn over the floors like sea shells flooded in on a neap tide and stranded. Gabriel hustled past her and disappeared.

Eunice sat down distractedly in a chair and crushed an old blue papier-maché bunny full of jelly beans she had sent Cornel in the spring. "Oh, why did I ever come? What shall I do? What *shall* I do?" she wept, a great and heavy forehead leveled against a weak hand. Her head ached, and her back ached. Her feet were sore. Her girdle was squeezing her to death. Calamitously, the new hat hurt her head.

She rose in an excitement of wretchedness and saw in the wall mirror that fatigue had drawn a plaid of dark lines between her brows.

A Negro man's head, much like a large peanut, went rapidly past the window toward the street. She heard a back door slamming, and Alexandra's wild tart quavers. Gabriel was a guttural. Cornel was with them, maddeningly piping.

"Why doanchu go see who come tuh see yuh? Why doanchu go see who dat pusson is?" Alexandra coaxed him. Eunice heard him coming at a bumping run.

The front room was dark with evening and winter. She caught

sight of him running spectrally through the paler hall. Then he ran sluggishly back again. "I cain't find nobody," he complained loudly. Gabriel and Alexandra were busy discussing something they didn't want him to hear. "Sho you kin see somebyee! You go look again."

Eunice heard him coming, breathing painfully and talking in loud whispers to himself. "I cain't see nobody. Maybe there ain't nobody heah."

"Cornel," she called. There was an instantaneous silence, deep and foreboding. Then he rushed squealing in. A big wolfish grin on his face and his little eyes said, Aha! He was a big five-year-old with chubby protruding cheeks. His lips parted on small deckers of rotten teeth. "Oh, me!" Eunice thought drearily. He was Mary's child, not hers.

"What are you grinning about?" she forced herself to say, indulgently poking his fat-covered ribs with her finger. He quickly shut himself on his ribs, then opened them to view again to tease her. He chuckled chestily. "Aunt Euny," he chortled caressingly, "Aunt Euny."

He was terribly interested in her. She was soft bosomed, papescent, and she puzzled him. Inside him soft little bunches of organic firecrackers were going off, transmuted into tintinnabulating sensations. He began roving nervously around her, sometimes going behind her as she sat in the chair. She always turned her head quickly to watch him. She didn't know what he might do to her — konk her, blind her, stab her to death.

Eunice didn't go to the hospital. She told Gabriel that she'd wait until Mary came home, to greet her. "I get sick when I go to a hospital," she explained lamely. Gabriel had grinned sourly, looking like the very personification of a gargoyle. "Where do you go when you want to get well?" he said flippantly. "I stay home," she said devoutly, but she looked pale and troubled, stung in conscience. She wished she could like Mary, but there was a jealous hostility between them.

But Eunice did take Cornel to church with her on Wednesday night, seeking out the Lord. She listened with a sober face while a pinkfaced puppet shook his fist at them from the high pulpit. His bald head, crowned by light from frosty bulbs in the chandelier, seemed as tiny as a pink dime. She heard little beyond the reading of the text, a few baroque sentences from Revelations, the words ringing hollow like coins in a stairwell. She daydreamed.

All the sermon was of the same exalted tumult. He hurled short sentences in a powerful blasting voice which curved at the ends of

them, snapped them off, and left room for silence to come chiming in. He used awesome vowels, and she sat seething with murmuring music, her own accompaniment.

Cornel had played with hymnbooks, knocking them against the seat and toppling them to the floor, dropping down to pick them up, and turning their pages until they whizzed like fans and clapped to with loud knocks. Finally he crawled as deep as he could to the back of his plywood seat. She patted a chub of him absentmindedly.

She tried to dream her old terrible dream of crime against young girls. Nothing came of it. She felt too actively alive, normal. Cornel's breath was now a little buzz out of the slack of his open mouth, and saliva drooled onto his under cheek. She shushed him, but his eyelids barely quivered.

After an age there was a shuffling of hymnbooks and a scuffling of feet and bodies. The preacher called for a number from the congregation. Someone gave out 119. "That's a good hymn," the preacher said judiciously, lifting his head and gazing far out into the sea of the congregation with stern approval. He came down out of the pulpit and paced up and down, waiting for the pianist to seat herself sleepily on the stool. There were three anticipatory chords, a charged pause, and a wild ragged beginning. The preacher sang hoarsely but lustily. People whose legs had gone to sleep rubbed the backs of their necks and giggled sheepishly as they stumped about a little. Clothing rustled interminably.

Eunice now felt hungry to hear the ordinary sounds of human voices, to experience the warmth of handshakes, and to share plebeian thoughts. After this visitation of God, she yearned for fleshly warmth. But she did not know how to obtain this.

Cornel had wakened and lolled in his seat, his wet mouth on his languid hand, his eyes full of suffering and disillusionment. Twice he had turned to her and croaked some terrible mournful hoarse sound, like a starved animal, but she frowned and seized his chin with her hand and closed his mouth on its hinges.

"Brr," shivered Eunice as they walked home hand in hand on dark sidewalks. The temperature had taken a sharp drop during the past hour. A freezing wind strummed electric wires and branches. Clouds moved swiftly across the great arc of the dark blue sky, whose moving gaps scanned phosphorescent and spidery stars and a sulphurous moon. The air was a thousand celestial harps contained in a monster shell.

At about three o'clock in the morning the cold wave reached its

zenith over Asheville. It was as omnipotent as an armored column in an occupation moment. When she woke at nine Eunice felt helplessly comfortable, though edged with barbed wretchedness. The cold was acid. The night had passed with intimations of misery as the cold bore in. She had risen three times to get more blankets. She lay in the languid lukewarm sheets and felt that she could not force herself to move from the spot, warned by faint draughts on neck and wrists. She hadn't the willpower to defy those sharp teeth.

Alexandra had a heater seething in the next room. Eunice could hear it lightly booming like a loose tapped drumhead. Alexandra called out, on hearing Eunice sigh and stir, "Miz Eunice, you come in heah tuh dress. I got uh nyuss fyuh in heah. I gon tek Cawnel in duh kitchun."

"Thank you, Alexandra," called Eunice. And, "You're mighty smart this morning!"

The heater burned her radiant wherever skin was exposed on left arm and leg. She let it ripen her right side then, and quickly grew cold when she withdrew. Her clothes got scorching hot as they hung on the chairs. She put them on and shrank from them until they had given up their spirit.

Gabriel, who was sleeping at the doctor's house opposite the hospital, came home at ten o'clock. He was grizzled, grey, and enigmatic, a reluctant putty. "She seems to be resting." He read the dry rustling newspaper column by column. "How can he?" Eunice thought miserably, begrudging him his strange sedative.

Gabriel dropped the paper onto his lap and stirred his coffee thoughtfully. "If she is better, you needn't stay. Alexandra can look after Cornel." Because she didn't want to feel shunted, Eunice frantically pretended that he didn't want her to feel forced to stay. (But she wanted to stay!) "Oh, I've got to get home to Mama, Gabriel," she said virtuously, toying with her food. "You know what a load on my mind she is." No muscle moved in his bland face.

Then suddenly Eunice wanted to go home indeed, to the warmth of Mama, who wanted her, and to the warmth of the lowlands of South Carolina, where the dusty trees were still respected for their wells of cool air and where leaves were just beginning to turn. For she confused weather and places with issues and persons.

It was Alexandra's afternoon off. Gabriel drove Eunice and Cornel to the movies on his way back downtown — Eunice's last fling. Eunice took Cornel's chubby little hand and led him down the dark aisle,

holding his hand heavenward at the full length of her horizontal arm. She seated him in black nadir and fearfully gave herself up to it too. She sighed.

Eunice sighed frequently, it was so tedious, but she never doubted for a moment that it was a magnificent picture. "Wasn't that a good picture?" she said, leading Cornel through big glass doors into the daylight. "Uh-huh," said Cornel obediently, fat with satisfaction.

As they neared home they could hear the telephone trilling a block away. Inside the house it was violent. Eunice said hello to hear Gabriel say brutally, "How many times did you see that picture?" She was shocked by the voltage of his rapacious tone. "What is it?" she said in a little childlike voice, the strain strangling her. "Mary's gone," Gabriel said in a flat axe way.

It was five minutes of six by the ornate gilt clock with the brown face. She could see its reflection in the cabinet glass. But time had ceased to function in her mind; she sensed the presence of eternity.

The room grew queer. The furniture seemed distorted. She saw everything with emotional astigmatism. "Are you coming home?" she said faintly, while the house yawned around her. This was what she had been afraid would happen, and now she was naked, unprepared.

"Home? Home?" he yelled with a sob. "Am I —?" He stopped short in his anger. "Yes, I'll be coming home," he said heavily, and hung up. Hearing the clank, Eunice was terrified. "What have *I* done? Why does he hate me?"

"You have no regrets about this woman," her heart accused her. "You are thinking only of yourself instead of the woman dead." Guiltily she struggled to think good, gentle thoughts about the evaporated Mary. After all, Mary was her sister under God's gaze.

The funeral was sad and wild. Gabriel went about like a brutal tusked boar, stiff-lipped, unable to cry. A howl was frozen in him. Mary's people came and passed through the house, coarsening the presence of death with their false manners. They talked foolishness about the virtue of the dead woman. They gossiped about each other among themselves, the wars of the kin being most bitter.

Eunice grew swollen from woe and lack of woe, so nervous she could hardly touch her food or sleep. She managed to weep beside the casket, squeezing out a few tears of self pity, but what she really felt was horror at having to see her old enemy prostrate and done, and a kind of anger that it must be so. In a peculiar sense, she needed her

enemies, she needed objects to hate and fear. But, actually though, she was so glad Mary was dead.

Two full days passed; she thought them centuries. Alexandra kept Cornel, who wet his bed two nights in a row, staining the mattress, and who sobbed himself to sleep when he napped with Eunice in the afternoons.

"My Mama's dead, Alexandra," he blubbered, looking up at her in appeal while she was cooking another dead bean meal, his lips wildly trembling.

"She's wif de anjuls in hebum," Alexandra answered sturdily, as if surprised he could cry at such good news. "Why she's habin de bess kine uh times. Doan you worry none bout her. Why she's lookin down dis minute, and she gone see you crine n she gone feel mighty bad. You doan wanna make her feel bad, does you?"

"Well, why doesn't she come home, then?" he screamed, and he burst into sobs so violent he couldn't say anything for awhile but a broken gibberish. Eunice, talking with the undertaker about a few underclothes for Mary, had heard him and longed to put him to sleep forever. She would as soon have witnessed a hanging as his grief. He cried himself out and sat with a smashed face in the woodbox while Alexandra, humming low and cheerfully, trotted to and fro. He looked dazed and discouraged.

Gabriel drove Eunice and Cornel to South Carolina when the funeral was over. Eunice and Cornel sat on the back seat. Gabriel was in the front alone with Mary. He paid little attention to them, except to ask them if they wanted to "rest" when he bought gas at isolated stations he selected along the narrow roads. He had shut himself into Mary's coffin, crying to get out, and trying incessantly to warm the dead to life. Death was rude, riding over them roughshod.

Eunice read Cornel animal stories in a low voice, while Cornel sat dumbly beaten, hunched over, who had been so proud. Eunice longed for relief from her slavery to the child. She looked out at the tusks of ice which hung on the great stones butting through the earthskinned mountains. Under the spell of the illustrations in the little book, she saw the hoary foreign craniums of elephants and wild boars, walruses, rhinoceroses, and hippopotamuses, all surging from the earth with primitive abandon, and she felt wild and sick.

Cities, towns, and farms rushed by. Mountaineers' houses and pastures perched on the sides of big hills and old mountains. The fire towers, the tiny windmills, the pale patches of pasturelands high over

the roads in the valleys, and little ribbons of mountainfalls looked bleak in the savage and unseasonable weather. The wind battled the car with whistles and squeals.

Cornel quietly sobbed, his head in Eunice's lap, his feet pushing rudely at the sides of the car. Sometimes he pushed his little buttocks up and around. Sometimes he moved his head up so that it pushed against her thighs in a way that hurt her. She patted him helplessly with her hand to quiet him.

Eunice began to grow hollow with hunger. She tried to inhibit a loud argument among her viscera by breathing with her stomach. She was very nervous, and the groaning grew very loud. Cornel heard it and sat up. "Do you know what that is?" she said, to divert him, pointing at a sheepdog. "Is it a horse?" he said dully.

In Charlotte Gabriel drove them to a lunchwagon, where he bought them each a warm plate of hamburger and fried potatoes, a glass of milk, and a tomato and lettuce salad. Food was dead for him. Eunice suspected the waitress of having syphilis — a thin dark girl with run-over heels and a haggard air. Cornel wept until he obtained ice cream glory.

At ten-ten that night, in some godforsaken hamlet, the car broke down. Eleven-thirty saw a large woman in black serge with a small husky boy in black cap and clothes board a southbound train. Gabriel stayed with the automobile.

Most of the passengers were asleep. The little boy stared with black eye pores into the black window and dim reflecting glass. Finally he dozed. He woke, tortured. He broke the slumbrous quiet with a thin, hoarse wail. Eunice caught him up onto her ample lap in horror. "Hush, we're almost there."

He broke off, began a long lugubrious whine. "Aaah hanh hanh hanh." "What is it! Shhh. What is it!" whispered Eunice in agony and imploration.

People were beginning to rouse in their seats and to cock sleep-dulled eyes at them as she fought to get to the bottom of this thing. All she could evoke was a loud roupy deploring, in which not one syllable was intelligible. "Well, what is it! Tell me what it is!" she whispered urgently.

"Ah wummuh koah, ah wummuh koah," he wailed, unable to clear his throat of phlegm and make his idea clear.

"Hush, hush, hush! Just tell me what's the matter." He set up a louder whine. "Well, what is it?" she said sadly. "Please try to hush. Can't you understand? Do you want your clothes off?"

Finally he was able to tell her wheezily that he wanted her to blow his nose for him.

He slept, exhausted. Mother was not going to tuck him in tonight. The lights were dim. The train rocked along the road. Eunice held him to her bosom and gazed stoically into space. On the seats across the aisle a young couple were dozing and snuggling, the young boy's hand groping along the girl's passively outstretched leg. Eunice gazed at them pessimistically. How could they be . . . so obscene?

She got off the train in the dead of night, long past the hours of humanity. It was still cold. The night taxi sat in the deserted roadway like a beetle. She carried Cornel, because he was more asleep than awake, staggering down the platform ramp with him in her arms, and bammed on the taxi door.

Wind rattled paper mysteriously in some big crates along the depot wall. There was warmth on her bosom where Cornel had lain. It was pleasant, and she felt him sit up with reluctance. He was gradually peeling away the cloves of sleep. She tried to hug him to her bosom, but he squirmed away coldheartedly. The taxi drove through black water. Eunice wondered if the taxi driver were a pimp, if Mama would be very tired, if Nina would be on the back sofa.

She sat on the edge of her mother's bed, gazing at the headboard with great dark sightless eyes. "Cornel went back to sleep all right, Hon?" "Yes, I gave him some warm milk, and he's dead to the world," Eunice said softly, picking lifelessly at the tufts in the white coverlid.

"You all right, Hon?" said little Mama, lying back like a doll, with her long whitened hair flowing on the pillow and softening her old, haggard, yearning face.

Mama looked more feeble than Eunice had remembered her, and looking into the dim old eyes Eunice felt her own brimming with a sudden hot flood. She sat biting her lips, not speaking. Suddenly she toppled over onto the bed, gulping.

"What's the matter, Hon?" came that drab but gentle voice from the pillows. "Oh, Mother, Mother!" Eunice wanted to cry, "I'm terribly unhappy! Everything is wrong with my life! I've been unhappy for years, and there's nobody to tell and nothing to do. When I was a child people could help me out, but no one can help me now. I'm so lonely, so lonely!" But she could not. She could not afflict Mama. She put her hand out and stroked the old woman's lean old knuckly hand with somber pity.

"It's been real cold in the mountains," she gasped, sitting up, dumbly realizing that no one would ever know. She rose, shaking out

the folds of her nightgown. "Poor thing," the old woman was muttering.

"How does she know?" Eunice wondered frantically. "I didn't mean to cry, Mama," she said somewhat peevishly. "It's just nerves, I guess."

"You should have married some fine man," Mama mused softly. "Somebody who'd be good to you."

"Pshaw!" said Eunice curtly. "If I were married to my own brother even, I think I'd die. Men aren't worth it, Mama!" She added maliciously, "Besides, I couldn't leave you."

"Now, Hon," said the old woman tenderly, "don't say that. You know I wouldn't keep you."

"Anyway, pooh," muttered Eunice. "I'd rather die."

The old woman, knowing something of physiologies, thought it best never to hint of a certain physical pleasure, though she suspected that spinsterhood was unhealthy. These things were best left murky. Who could explain marriage, save in terms of mystic passion, and make it palatable? She changed her tack.

"Well, now you can rest, Hon. I'll do the housework for the next few days, and you can look after little Cornel. I think you'll have fun together, the poor little fella. Oh, Hon, sometimes I think the Lord has forgotten us. We're not much to brag about, are we?"

"No," sighed Eunice, "I don't guess we are."

She leaned over and kissed the old woman on the forehead, and while she was doing this she dumbly remembered that she had never been kissed by a man on the mouth. Did women make the effort with their lips while being kissed, or did they merely accept the septic print? No, she had never been kissed. But she didn't miss it. What was there in a kiss to make men enthusiastic about it? Besides, her life was full of passion now, passionate drudgery.

She wished that Cornel was a little girl; little boys played so rough. She was afraid of him.

"The preacher came by yesterday afternoon looking for you. They're going to hold a special service of prayer for Judge Sheip, and he wanted you to get together with some of the women and make a special program. He said to tell you to remember him in your prayers."

A gleam of hope shot through the darkness.

"And how is the Lord's work going, Mama!" Eunice cried.

W. Y. TINDALL:

Dante and Mrs. Bloom

As we read *Ulysses* again it becomes plain that Mrs. Bloom occupies the center of things. It may be that the discovery of Mr. Bloom is the climax of the enormous comedy. But Stephen's understanding of Mrs. Bloom is his final triumph, a triumph to which Mr. Bloom leads him. It is Dante more than any other who leads us to knowledge of what Stephen finds.

To follow Dante we must keep Joyce's materials and his method in mind. His materials, like those of most great literature, are significant. Indeed, his materials are as significant as Dante's and of the same sort. Joyce is concerned with the relationship of man to himself, society, and God. But his method of handling these materials is far from obvious. Like Dante, Joyce was a symbolist, and the characteristic of any kind of symbolism, whether medieval or modern French, is suggestion. Avoiding statement and description, the symbolist presents experience by sign, symbol, allusion, rhythm, and tone. Joyce worked most often by these devices or, in a word, by analogy.

Every reader of *Ulysses* knows the principal analogies upon which the book is founded: the Homeric, the Christian, and the Shakespearean. We know that Mr. Bloom is not only Mr. Bloom but Odysseus, Jesus, and the ghost in Hamlet. We also know that Bloom is Stephen. These analogies, which give other dimensions to the narrative and make it more general, work in harmony, each supporting the others and adding meanings. But these analogies are only the most important of the system of correspondences that Joyce created. Minor analogies, although commonly unnoticed, help give *Ulysses* its richness, massiveness, and depth.

Perhaps the most important of these minor analogies is Dante's *Comedy,* which works in harmony with Homer and supports the Christian theme. Allusions to Dante, whom young Joyce loved this side of Ibsen alone, abound in Joyce's works. The many hints of Dante in *Dubliners* come to an ironic climax in "Grace." The literary and frigid young lady of *Exiles* is named Beatrice. But the *Vita Nuova* is more elaborately suggested in *A Portrait of the Artist.* Stephen's shadowy girl, encountered on the steps of the last tram or in the portico of the library, distantly recalls Beatrice. Like Dante, Stephen

writes verses in her honor, quotes them, and resolves to go away and write a great book. But this parallel, allusive and far from systematic, is no less ironic than Joyce's portrait of Stephen. That hero, in despair of closer contact than Beatrice promises, turns on "the spiritual-heroic refrigerating apparatus, invented and patented in all countries by Dante Alighieri."

The most obvious allusion to Dante in *Ulysses* is Stephen's ironic account in the Eumaeus episode of the impetuosity of Italians: "we have the impetuosity of Dante and the isosceles triangle, Miss Portinari, he fell in love with and Leonardo and san Tommaso Mastino." Why Beatrice is an isosceles triangle, though difficult, is not beyond conjecture. Maybe she is isosceles rather than equilateral (like Mrs. Bloom and the mark of Bass' ale) because she has almost no bottom. St. Thomas Aquinas, Dante's philosopher, is described as a mastiff (Mastino) here, and elsewhere as "the bulldog of Aquin," because during the Middle Ages by a Latin pun on their name the Dominicans were known as dogs of God. Joyce, who had a horror of dogs, was turning at this time from Aquinas to Bruno, and he had turned already, as Stephen proclaims in *Stephen Hero,* from Dante to Ibsen. But Joyce found Dante more useful than Bruno or Ibsen as a parallel for Stephen's quest. This parallel, suggested less by allusions than by quotations from *The Divine Comedy,* implies that Telemachus-Hamlet-Stephen in search of a father or rather in search of himself is not unlike Dante.

Dante's quest is for moral, political, and religious adjustment. This multiple anxiety finds resolution in the visions at the end, first of the rose and then of circles. Each important episode of the quest is supposed to have four meanings — as a reader of the hundred best books is aware. On the literal level, the dark wood means that Dante as an individual is in a quandary, but on the moral, political, and divine levels it means the confusion of the times.

It is likely that Joyce found in these meanings the hint of a way to make Stephen more general. Joyce's problem was how to free his hero from personal attachment and, while retaining the details of autobiography, to raise him to symbol. But as Stephen remarks in the library: "His own image to a man with . . . genius is the standard of all experience, material and moral."

The parallels of Telemachus and Hamlet helped Joyce to make the individual more general. The parallel of Dante has a similar function. Although on the literal plane of the *Comedy* Dante is Dante, on the symbolic planes he is everyman searching for "peace and ardor." So

Stephen, while literally young Joyce, is symbolically every young man in search of maturity and adjustment. Using a hint from Dante, Joyce made the personal quest of an exiled aesthete the quest of mankind for humanity. On the aesthetic level Stephen finds the subject matter of his future art; on the moral, his adolescent pride yields to mature compassion; on the social, he begins to understand his oneness with common man; and on the religious, he finds in mankind a substitute for God. His success, which like his quest is far from being a mechanical parody of Dante, is symbolized by his meeting with Mr. Bloom and a little later by his apprehension of Mrs. Bloom.

In the Aeolus episode Stephen, meditating the rhymes of the poem he has written on the beach, quotes four fragments from the *Inferno:*

. . . . . *la tua pace* [V 92]
. . . . . *che parlar ti piace* [V 94]
. . . . . *mentrechè il vento, come fa, si tace.* [V 96]
. . . . . *per l'aer perso* . . . . . [V 89]

On the literal level these fragments are examples of rhyme and of Stephen's learning, but in the matter of Homer, since they concern Paolo and Francesca, these fragments agree with the other references to wind in that gusty chapter. Morally, since Paolo and Francesca occupy the second circle, these lines refer to lust, one of Stephen's dearest sins. But these lines from the *Inferno* are followed immediately by two fragments from the *Paradiso: "quella pacifica oriafiamma"* (XXXI 127) and *"di rimirar fé piú ardenti"* (XXXI 142). Both of these concern the mystical rose of Dante's vision. By way of these quotations we rise from human lust to divine love, from time to eternity, from Francesca to Mary. It is my contention that this progress suggests that of Stephen from the lust and pride of the *Portrait* to the charity implied by Joyce's presentation of Mrs. Bloom.

Mr. Bloom is at once God, humanity, and the subject of Joyce's art. But having discovered Mr. Bloom, Stephen leaves him. As Mr. Bloom accompanies Stephen to the back yard, Stephen silently intones, in the words of the 113th Psalm, the departure from Egypt for the promised land: *"In exitu Israël de Egypto: domus Jacob de populo barbaro."* This recalls the theme of Moses and the Pisgah sight of Palestine that occupies so large a part of the Aeolus chapter. But Stephen's choice of Psalm also serves the parallel of Dante. It is at once the most obscure and the most significant allusion to Dante and his symbolic method in Joyce's work. The allusion is to Dante's

Epistle to Can Grande. Dedicating the *Paradiso* to his patron, Dante chose this Psalm to illustrate his fourfold method:

> To elucidate, then, what we have to say, be it known that the sense of this work is not simple, but on the contrary it may be called polysemous, that is to say, "of more senses than one"; for it is one sense which we get through the letter, and another which we get through the thing the letter signifies; and the first is called literal, but the second allegorical or mystic. And this mode of treatment, for its better manifestation, may be considered in this verse: "When Israel came out of Egypt, and the house of Jacob from a people of strange speech. . . ." For if we inspect the letter alone the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt in the time of Moses is presented to us; if the allegory, our redemption wrought by Christ; if the moral sense, the conversion of the soul from the grief and misery of sin to the state of grace is presented to us; if the anagogical, the departure of the holy soul from the slavery of this corruption to the liberty of eternal glory is presented to us.

That Joyce had this passage in mind is evident. Stephen sings "When Israel came out of Egypt" to prepare the learned reader for a new *Paradiso* and, suggesting the fourfold method, to prepare him for more than one level of meaning. Dante's explication of the Psalm summarizes Stephen's triumph and one of the central meanings of *Ulysses*. Led by his Moses from bondage to the realization of his humanity, Stephen is free at last to achieve eternal glory by art.

But Stephen has not had his final vision. As he and Bloom emerge from the door into that infertile garden:

> What visible luminous sign attracted Bloom's who attracted Stephen's gaze?
>
> In the second storey (rere) of his (Bloom's) house the light of a paraffin oil lamp with oblique shade projected on a screen of roller blind . . .
>
> How did he elucidate the mystery of an invisible person, his wife Marion (Molly) Bloom, denoted by a visible splendid sign, a lamp?
>
> With indirect and direct verbal allusions or affirmations: with subdued affection and admiration: with description: with impediment: with suggestion.

As they gaze at Marion's lamp, Bloom and Stephen make water. The lamp is Stephen's final enlightenment. Making water symbolizes his consequent realization of creative power.

Joyce was fascinated with water and with making it. From Mother Grogan in the first chapter of *Ulysses* to Mrs. Bloom on her pot in the last, the tinkle of waters is audible. By a natural association urine serves some children as a sexual symbol. It is plain that it served Joyce in this capacity. "U.P.," the message on mad Mr. Breen's postcard, means urination and erection. "Wee wee," one of the epithets for Anna Livia Plurabelle, means not only that she is small and that, like Mrs. Bloom, she says yes, but that she makes water. In the tenth chapter of *Finnegans Wake,* angle P of the equilateral triangle ALP is called "doubleviewed seeds," a union of maternal seeds with W.C. To Joyce water meant life and making water was not only creating life but, by extension, creating art. When Stephen urinates beneath Mrs. Bloom's lamp, he is affirming a sudden awareness of the latter power. It may seem surprising that his aesthetic maturity should be represented by something so childish — but we must remember that *Ulysses* is comic.

Mrs. Bloom's window and her lamp constitute a vision of ultimate reality. Casting on the ceiling a pattern of "concentric circles," her lamp seems to imply Dante's final vision of the Trinity and to prepare the way for Joyce's final vision of cyclical history. As Dante was led to his vision not by Beatrice but by St. Bernard, so Stephen is led to his vision by Mr. Bloom. It seems likely that in one of his capacities Mr. Bloom serves as St. Bernard, and it is likelier that Mrs. Bloom represents Dante's mystical rose, symbol of heaven and of the Blessed Virgin. Or rather, to give the relationships their due, St. Bernard and the rose expand the meanings of Mr. and Mrs. Bloom.

The Virgin as rose and queen of the rosary is a principal theme of Gerty MacDowell's chapter. That young lady, one of Marion's surrogates, is connected with Marion and Martha by perfume. Martha wants to know what kind to use; Gerty uses whiterose; while Mrs. Bloom uses opoponax or juice of all-healing. As Mr. Bloom and Gerty sit on the beach, she blushes a glorious "rosebloom." Meanwhile Father John Hughes, S.J., conducting in the church nearby the men's temperance retreat, celebrates the rosary and gives benediction:

> pray for us, honourable vessel, pray for us, vessel of singular devotion, pray for us, mystical rose. And careworn hearts were there . . . and many who had erred and wandered, their eyes wet with contrition but for all that bright with hope for the reverend father Hughes had told them what the great saint Bernard said in his famous prayer of Mary . . .

St. Bernard, whose devotion to the Virgin is singular, comes next to St. Leopold in the procession of saints in the preceding chapter. Leopold, whose devotion to Mary-Marion seems as great (though far from singular), is described in the Ithaca chapter as "centripetal." Like Dante's Bernard, Bloom, looking up at Marion's lamp, is drawn to the central petal.

As for roses: Yeats used them, and Eliot too, but Joyce's *Portrait* and *Ulysses* are a garden of those blooms. They generally suggest women, eternity, and creative ecstasy. In the *Portrait,* for example, Mercedes, Stephen's dream-girl, lives in a garden of rosebushes. As Stephen wakes one morning and composes a poem, his moment of creation is presented in terms that associate it with his girl, with mystical ecstasy in general and, in particular, with Dante's vision of the enormous rose:

> Gabriel the seraph had come to the virgin's chamber. An afterglow deepening within his spirit, whence the white flame had passed, deepening to a rose and ardent light. That rose and ardent light was her strange and wilful heart . . . and lured by that ardent roselike glow the choirs of the seraphim were falling from heaven . . . The roselike glow . . . burned up the world, consumed the hearts of men and angels: the rays from the rose that was her wilful heart.

The very flowers of the wallpaper, "great overblown scarlet flowers," form a "roseway from where he lay upwards to heaven all strewn with scarlet flowers." In *Ulysses* flowers are everywhere. But they flourish in greatest profusion in the chapters of lotus-eating and siren song. While the band plays the song of the Yorkshire rose, Blazes Boylan hurries to Mrs. Bloom with a carnal carnation between his teeth. In the Circe episode, Henry Flower, recipient of a faded flower from Martha, sings: "There is a flower that bloometh." In the same chapter, dreaming of the womancity, Bloom sees a fountain among mammoth roses. Miss Douce, the barmaid of the Sirens chapter, who is closely associated with Marion, composes the jumping rose on her satiny bosom. In this chapter of song and roses, it is made clear that the Blessed Virgin herself is a kind of siren, who, no less than Miss Douce and Mary-Marion Bloom, draws men to her.

The answer to Lenehan's riddle (What opera is like a railway line?) is Rose of Castille. Lenehan associates this with Miss Douce; but Bloom, perverting Lenehan's question to "What railway opera is like a tramline in Gibraltar?" associates it with Marion. She is from

Spain; she is connected with Bloom's soap; and she is certainly a rose; but why she is a railway is unclear unless it is because she is a common carrier. She is a rose — and that is partly why, I think, Joyce chose the name of Bloom. Before meeting Bloom, Marion pretends she is engaged to Don Miguel de la Flora, and when Bloom comes along, she picks him. When, as she lies in bed she thinks of her name, she finds it suitable.

As she lies in bed she thinks first of Bloom and then, as if to provoke associations, of Mrs. Riordan, the Dante of *A Portrait of the Artist.* She recalls the white rose she wore when Mulvey's letter came and how as a girl in Gibraltar she was a rose. And at the end of her rumination she thinks: "I love flowers Id love to have the whole place swimming in roses." As her thoughts rise to the tremendous affirmation she is lost in an ecstasy of red roses and flowers of the mountain. Creative power, the river and mountain of life, the fecundity of nature, the wonder of God are united in these ultimate symbols.

Mrs. Bloom is neither the Blessed Virgin nor the mystical rose of heaven. But however earthy, she is like them in symbolizing unity, reconciliation, and peace. As human Mr. Bloom is compared to God, yet is not God, so human Mrs. Bloom is compared, with Dante's help, to the rose of God. Not to be taken literally, these comparisons are correspondences that carry the meaning of the book. The same holds for Stephen's vision of her lamp. Although he calls upon Dante's vision by analogy, Stephen's enlightenment is humane. His vision of this world corresponds to Dante's vision of the next. After his mystical vision of heaven, Dante returns to write his *Comedy*. After his mystical vision of humanity, Stephen, now mature Joyce, leaves Bloom's back yard to write his comedy. His ecstasy at finding himself, his sudden sense of wholeness and power, his understanding confirm the words of Hermes: as above so below.

Ulysses, which tells of the flowering of Stephen's genius, is the fruit of that genius. Since Mrs. Bloom is the heart of *Ulysses,* she is not only flower of vision but fruit of creation. Mr. Bloom in Stephen's dream offers the still frustrated poet a melon. This "creamfruit," which Stephen eventually accepts, is associated with the fertility of the Orient, where Mrs. Bloom in another dream undulates in Turkish trousers. Marion's fruitiness is established by Bloom's final act of the day: he kisses her "plump mellow yellow smellow melons . . . with . . . melonsmellonous osculation." Not Dante but Mr. Bloom is responsible for that correspondence.

All these correspondences — melons, roses, Odysseus, and the rest — are the materials of Joyce's art. His materials are significant, but although it may be that no work is great without great materials, no work is great for materials alone. The greatness of *Ulysses,* as of Dante's *Comedy,* lies in the relationships among these materials. Logically the sum of its parts, as Stephen observes, the work is greater aesthetically than their sum; for it is a form. Part corresponding to part composes a whole like nothing else. This organization involves our feelings because, creating them, it is their symbol.

What Joyce creates by the symbolic form of *Ulysses* seems to be a feeling at once of gaiety and peace. This peace, which is that of all great art, is easy to feel if not to understand. This gaiety, which seems the result of Joyce's acceptance and mastery, becomes ours as we improve in understanding. Joyce is like those Chinamen of Yeats' poem "Lapis Lazuli." Standing on their mountain, they contemplate the tragic scene in creative peace — and their eyes, "Their ancient, glittering eyes are gay."

DONALD JENKS:

Bus Station: End of Summer

This is the place to wait, to which all things
wearily hump their luggage in and wait.
Their unexpectant eyes complete the rings
of travel's rounds. The maps are rejected bait,
beckoning from the walls to surfeited fish
gorged to the gills with diner-fare and inns.
The rainbow's pot of dumpling same is the dish
that numbs the homing pigeons under the fans.

How many Jasons feeling they were fleeced
steal furtive affirmations from the clock
and kick the crumpled gear that held no key,
their diaries' blank the logbook whitely traced
of voyagers who found the usual rock;
whom busses rescue from their argosy.

BREWSTER GHISELIN:

Faceplate at Crescent Bay

Why in these lonely waters lying lengthlong (to be lost?)
In the chop folding around these sunken islands,
The suck breaking like sobs (for what?) midocean?

What fears to be known, more than the Self? (My face
Is Black, my body is more broken than Christ embellied.
Do not believe. Stay. Do not look. . . . O come!)

Oceanward over combing eelgrass blue garnet
With fingering fins clings in, beyond purples and purples,
Tangerine flukes fanning Aladdin caverns. . . .

He came with a spear, to snatch with triple iron.
Reasonable: food, sport. Why now is he lying alone
Like kelp on the water? On the breadth of other reasons.

Where shall he find, and what? The dragging water
Under his eyes muddled with facts and darkening
Floorless — the luring flood — commends to him the shore.

Far still, in the open salt, the moon's and the sun's
Descent and the successive stars' and his,
Awash in the arms he lingers, the west and the glare.

CECILY R. McNEIL:

Agnes Sorel as the Madonna, by Foucquet

While languid cherubs gaze, she holds
Him; a child herself to bear
The jeweled crown and heavy folds
Of state. She hardly seems to care

For Him, but poses as if dressed
To masquerade. Meanwhile, in duty bound
She offers Him an orb, one waxen breast
Death-white and, as the world is, round.

LYSANDER KEMP:

The Cliff

Harbor of San Juan, Puerto Rico

Milton was wrong: the architecture of hell
is not a heaven of pillar, scroll and frieze,
no gold, no grace. From the strict rail we minded
a setting of hell, a shambles of slumtumble shanties
under the blood-orange cliffdrop green at the wings.

Hell, then, is hell: we glimpsed the damned on-stage,
flimsy in cotton, oh not in refulgent armor
pulsing sword on shield the discord of challenge,
and tiny from our distance, a poor show,
Piglets miscast as fiends. The Fiend was big.

A few great lines, then? Possibly one superb
denunciamento blurted however crudely?
Vain hopes are cropt, all mouths are stopt: the tiny
scorching parson knew. Our whistle hooted.
Mutely the hopeless dumb-show answered, nothing.

Later, white, angel-tall, change in our pockets,
virtue sparkling from our precious hearts, we held
surpassing northerly. Still still how perdition's
confounded burning after-image burned!
which all the gorgeous fathoms could not quench.

STEPHEN STEPANCHEV:

A Sailor and His Girl

This able seaman, poised on a cardboard sea —
Oars flailing waves arched over painted star —
Prides in his summer and his hot, guerdon babe
Fondling her doll beside him, mewling prize
Pitched from a tank-perched Negro. Antic joy
Rushes her lips: "Just feel his muscle, Flo!"

The logos flash of an arcade camera
Weds them, arrests their Eden victory
In two-dimensional immortality,
Issue as real as Abel's repeating eyes.
But print is shocking; hear their spun laughter drift
Through carousels of horns and barkers' cries!

The tocsin of their hearts predicts the wane
Of photograph and ivy shuttering up the eye,
Reason enough for coaster and merry-go-round —
How still, they say, time stands at the speed of light!
Ride, ride, and fall! — the sailor, subway-bound,
Bloodies a clock to ride his girl good night.

D. P.

The known is no Rosetta stone
To the unknown; nature is prodigal
Of rarities, incredible till charted:
Matching Greek centaur with a red-
Eyed albino hawk, a wingless fly.

This tattered exile lifts cautious
Eyes to the foreign sun, sets shy
Feet on power's cropped lawn, hugs
His bowl against new treacheries —
Foretold but not predicted by the old:

Knowing that Protean perfidy
Is man's perennial surprise —
Masking in song, feast, clasp of eye,
Lurking most surely in the word
That knifes even the betrayer: love.

MASON JORDAN MASON:

Supernatural

Last dream
the long white cane

Aphrodite
shutting all her eyes

No winter so mighty
that the hog is dead

Now the winter is screaming
and his tusk is broken

The lemons quash
to the hard white ground

Root
you old razor back boar

Root, or else die
in your dung

Crony

Didn't it ever
like the lemonade salesman
but the heaven was black
as it would never be

When I sing

Longer and longer
the notes longer and longer

When I moan

Never a mammy
to my wretched name
never a mammy
though half the world round

That's the way it been
the way it was
just like ever

Even if I was a Jew

JACK STRICKLAND:

Pooch-Old-Boy

Even before he was fully awake, Pooch Ritter knew that he was lying on a jail cot. He lay listening to the heavy snores of the other men in the cell and smelling the sour whiskey and sweat before he opened his eyes to look at the barred window and the gray sky beyond it. Then he closed his eyes again and tried to remember how he had come to be here. He gave up, finally, and swung his thick legs over the edge of the cot, groping for his shoes with stockinged feet. After he had found the shoes and tied their mended laces, he closed his eyes again and dropped his head into his hands, probing with stubby fingers the horseshoe of sandy hair above his ears. He was thirsty, but he had known for a long time that it was better for him not to drink much water after he had been drunk — and he was sure now that drunkenness was responsible for his being here. If he had not been drunk, he would have remembered by this time what had happened. Pooch opened his eyes and stood up without stretching, then walked across the slick floor to the wash basin and turned the water on. He allowed it to run until he thought it was cool enough, then bent over and washed his face and neck in it, not caring that it soaked into his blue denim shirt. He drank only a little of the water before he raised his head to meet his gaze in the mirror.

He no longer pushed at the puffy bags of skin below his reddened eyes as he had done the first few times he had seen them. Now he confined his attention to the lower part of his face, rubbing the palm of his hand over the growth of beard that covered the dark mottling of his chin and jowls. Still stroking his wet face he walked to the door of the cell and called quietly, "Guard, hey guard. Someone out there, hey!" He tried to call in such a way that the sleeping prisoners in the cell would not awaken, but still loud enough to get attention. He stopped when he heard footsteps coming down the corridor and he waited with his hands clasped around the bars.

The guard, picking his teeth with a matchstick, said nothing when he stopped in front of the cell. Pooch did not look directly at him but gazed across the corridor to the wall opposite as he spoke. "Listen," he said, "do you know why I'm here? I haven't done anything much, have I?" The guard smiled, watching the lower part of Pooch's face.

"Why no, buddy, you didn't do much. You were crying when they brought you in here. You said you'd been rolled. You said your wallet was gone. They thought you had better sleep it off here."

Pooch looked at the smiling guard. "Well, listen," he said, "I'll straighten that out with them later, the wallet business. But I need a shave now. I hate to go and see them like this. Could I have a razor and some soap? I'd like to clean up a little."

The guard laughed. "You don't want a razor, friend," he said, "Your face would come apart. That's the finest crop of wine sores there on your chin I've seen in a while. No, I wouldn't shave yet." He turned and started to go away, then dropped the matchstick to the floor and turned around to face Pooch again. No longer smiling, he stood with his feet apart and his uniform coat thrust aside, his thumbs in his belt, looking straight at Pooch. "Maybe there's one thing more you ought to know," he said. "I'm not an errand-boy for lushes around this place, I'm the guy who carries the keys. Everyone gets treated alike. Nobody gets favors here. That's all." He turned then and walked down the corridor, his heels pounding on the cement, the keys jingling at his waist. Pooch waited for the noise to go away, then went to the barred window and watched snow falling past the bars and down onto the street and automobiles below.

It was nearly dark when Pooch opened the courthouse door and stood at the top of the steps. He buttoned his jacket tightly around his neck and pulled his cap down over his eyes before he walked into the open from under the arch of the doorway. He stopped under the streetlight at the foot of the steps and stood still. He did not know whether he should go right or left. A trail of footprints in the snow led right. He followed these, placing each foot carefully in the track ahead of him, his head bent, watching each step that he took. He had no money. His wallet had held the money from the last paycheck he had earned before the beginning of the strike, and Pooch did not think he would get the wallet back. He could not go to Johnson, either. Johnson was wrong. He always had money and he had always lent Pooch enough to last him, but Johnson was on the wrong side now. Pooch had decided, before, that he should wait until it was over before going around to Johnson's again, even to talk about bass — or bird.

The judge had not wasted much time on Pooch. He had said, "Yours is a very peculiar story, Ritter. If you did not have a job in this town, and if it were not that you have been in this court only

once before, I would hold you for vagrancy." Pooch knew that he looked bad and that he could not tell his story straight because he could not remember how it had been the night before. But he knew that they should not have treated him the way they did. The photographer had kicked the chair in which Pooch sat and had said, "All right, stupid, sit up there and look at this camera." They had made Pooch stand in the line-up. That had been the worst part of the day for Pooch. Now he breathed deeply of the cold air, glad he had been let out easily.

The tracks in the snow went no farther than the front of the Maple Leaf Bar, and then turned in. Pooch stood outside the glass window looking over the half-curtains until he saw Graham and more of the men from the shop seated in one of the booths. Then he went inside.

"We were speaking of the devil," Graham said, slapping Pooch on the shoulder. "Where have you been, Pooch-Old-Boy?"

"I have been in their jail," Pooch said. "I have been listening to cops all day today. This is a rotten bunch down there, let me tell you." He sat down. "Someone has got to buy me this beer. I'm broke."

Graham held up a finger at the bartender, then turned to Pooch. "How the hell jail, Pooch-Old-Boy? I didn't think you were so bad when I left last night. I would have taken you home to Alice if I had known you were that bad. Or I would have stuck around myself if I didn't have to go to work." Graham lifted his cap, running his fingers through his thick and curly hair, laughing to the rest of the men in the booth under his hand.

The man across the booth said to Pooch, "Graham was just telling us that he worked hard all night. When one job breaks up, he says, a man has to find something else to do." The rest of the men laughed.

Pooch looked at Graham and said, "Job already, Jim? Good for you! Do you suppose they could use another man? I'm going to need a job bad, now."

"Why, Pooch," Graham said, "they could probably use both of us. They always need good men." He was laughing very hard as he spoke and the rest of the men joined him. They laughed, and then they kept right on laughing. Finally the beer began to slosh over the rims of their glasses. They set the glasses on the booth top and wiped their eyes while Pooch smiled from one to the other, not knowing what it was that made Graham's job funny.

Graham waited until no one was laughing anymore, then said to

Pooch, "How did you come out last night, Pooch? When I left you, you were getting along fine with the blonde. That's what I don't understand. You didn't seem in bad shape to me and you were getting along all right with her." No one in the booth looked at Graham or Pooch, but they all sat silently and they listened.

Pooch crossed his arms flat on the booth-top and leaned his chin on his wrist. "I don't remember," he said. "I can't remember anything about it except that she told us a story while we were standing on the street and I went with her. You left."

"Yes," Graham said, "I was in a hell of a hurry to go." Now, no one smiled. Graham looked around him at the men in the booth. Murphy cleared his throat and spoke. His eyes were heavy-lidded and red. He had been turning the selection-wheel of the juke-box while Graham talked. He had been the only one who had not laughed at Graham's job. Now he said, "Somebody was speaking of work. Speaking of work, I have a little matter to place before this meeting. It concerns a scab."

Pooch was still thinking and trying to remember. "I don't even know where we were," he said. "All I remember is that she told me her husband was chasing her around the house. This morning I found out I'd been rolled."

"The name of this scab is Johnson," Murphy said.

Pooch shook his head and said to Graham, "You don't remember where we were when we left you last night do you, Jim?"

Graham watched Murphy. "I can't remember much, Pooch," Graham said. "We were both pretty drunk and I had to go."

Murphy raised a bottle, holding it by the cork and revolving it so that everyone could read the label. "I have here this bottle here," he said. "I propose we take this here bottle and go someplace where we can talk about what it is we should do with scabs. Especially those with the name of Johnson. He is a rat whether there is a strike or not. Also, he pimps." Murphy lowered the bottle to the floor and looked at the other men and waited.

Graham stood up quickly. That's good!" he shouted. "Let's do that. I already have a good idea what we should do with that scab."

Pooch put down his beer and shook his head. "That will end up in some kind of law trouble sure," he said. "I don't want to see that place anymore. I'm afraid to go home now. I don't want to make it any worse."

"Hell, Pooch," Graham said, "there won't be any trouble. You've been gone two days now. Alice won't miss you for another hour or

two. Don't worry about a thing."

They all stood up from the booth, scooping the silver from the booth-top into their pockets, and putting on their coats. They had left their caps on while they had been in the booth. Their faces were red and they talked loudly and laughed. Before going out of the bar, each one stopped and patted the bulge in Murphy's pocket. "We don't want to lose the mascot there," Graham said as they went out the door into the street.

The men began to sing as they walked down the street in the darkness. They did not get even a block away before Murphy took the whiskey bottle from his pocket and broke the seal. When the bottle had passed two or three times and Pooch had taken his turns at it, he began to feel better and he started to laugh and sing with the others. Graham walked ahead of the group, taking each corner, leading all of them, going straight toward Johnson's house, laughing occasionally and shouting, "Is Pooch-Old-Boy still with us? We don't want to lose Pooch." Then Pooch would sing louder and deeper, knowing that no one could mistake his voice when he allowed it to roll out. When they had come to within two blocks of Johnson's house, Graham stopped under a streetlight and said, "Let's just see that old bottle." Someone held it up in the light and shook it. "We'll finish that here," Graham said, "before we go any farther." He tilted it to his lips and passed it on. There was none left when the bottle reached Pooch. He hurled it across the street into the gutter and they went on, chanting "Scab Johnson" over and over.

Johnson's house was lighted only upstairs. It stood next to a vacant lot and the window threw a yellow square of light onto the snow in the field. A woman's shadow passed over the yellow patch and disappeared as the men stopped across the street. They had become quiet. Murphy ran into an alley behind them and Pooch saw him looking through a pile of trash behind a garage. Graham motioned the men into a circle around him. He said, "That scab's at work. We'll give him something to see when he gets here in the morning." Then he moved into the alley after Murphy. Pooch looked toward the lighted upper window, waiting for Mrs. Johnson's figure to reappear. Murphy came up holding a bucket in his hand. "It's grease. Jesus! This is just like Halloween used to be."

Pooch stayed across the street, watching as the men smeared the grease across the front of the house. They spelled S C A B in four-foot letters on the porch. The letters glistened in the moonlight. Then they dumped the rest of the grease on the porch and began to strew rubbish over it. They had stopped being careful about noise

now and yelled at each other as they worked. The woman opened the window upstairs and called down in a thin voice. Graham's laugh went up, "Ask your scab husband, he'll know." Then he came across to Pooch. "You've got to give 'em hell to break 'em of bad habits," he said. Get in it, Pooch-Old-Boy." He knelt and picked up two rocks, placing one in Pooch's hand. Graham threw his rock. It clattered against the roof of the house. Then Pooch threw the rock in his hand. The woman was standing in the window and from where Pooch stood under the tree he could see her drawn face outlined against the window, as she stared into the street. The rock went through the window; the glass tinkled faintly. She had moved aside as the rock went through the window. The men ran when the light went out.

They scattered quickly. Pooch ran across the moonlit field beside the house and across the railroad tracks. He hurried up an alley and out into the street. Here he stopped, alone. Leaning against a tree, he began to shake and he strained for breath, retching. "I knew it would end up like that," he said aloud. "I knew it would." At last, he went up the street toward his own house. It was the fourth from the corner, asbestos-sided like the rest of the houses on the street. But he went to it without counting. He stopped on the step between the sidewalk and the door to shake the snow from his shoes and legs. Then he opened the door and entered the darkened front room. He walked over the checkered linoleum floor, past the red-glowing coal stove and stood in the kitchen doorway.

Alice Ritter did not stop knitting. She sat at the kitchen table below the bare light which hung from the ceiling by the wire. The table was littered with dirty dishes, pushed to one side to make room for her yarn and a cup of coffee which was not steaming. A cigarette on the saucer smoked slowly and Pooch watched the smoke, not knowing what to say to his wife who sat with taut face looking carefully at her knitting, slumped in her chair, a coarse grey sweater fastened around her shoulders. When Pooch stepped into the lighted kitchen he said, "I am here now." His wife laid her knitting on the table and picked up the cigarette. She puffed at it and looked briefly at Pooch. Then she picked up her knitting again and counted the stitches on the needle. Pooch said thickly, "The breadwinner is home from jail. He's come home without any money."

"I don't want to hear about this," she said, "I don't want to hear any of it."

Pooch stood in the corner behind her shoulder and went on, "I'm going to go away and leave you alone. I'll go in and get my things.

and leave tonight. I don't want you to have to put up with me anymore." He looked at his wife's face. She had put her knitting in her lap and was looking straight ahead.

"I'm not going to listen to any more of this," she said.

Pooch walked to the doorway. "I came from jail and went with them while they smeared Johnson's house," he said. "She was there, and I threw a rock and tried to hit her with it. I'm no good. I'm never any good."

Alice Ritter covered her ears with her hands. "Not one more damn word," she said. "I know you. I know all about you. Go on. I'll be able to get along all right without you."

Pooch went to the bedroom, closing the door behind him. The room was very neat. It was neater than Pooch had ever seen it. The air in the room was as fresh as the air outside — and as cold. Pooch bent over to open the drawer of the chest. Then he straightened up and went over to the bed and pulled back the covers. The sheets were clean. Pooch sat down on the bed and began to remember.

First he remembered the night before, then the day. And he heard again the laughter of the men and saw their beer spilling. Now he recognized what he had known all day long and he felt anger rise suddenly within him, drawing his face tight.

Pooch stood up quickly and walked toward the closed door. He stopped with his hand on the knob, then turned and went to the window. He stood looking out at the soft snow drifting around the corner of the house, building up toward the window ledge. He saw the rock as it spun through the light into a barred room where the keys tinkled in its path as it came to rest on the clean cement floor. As he watched he felt his anger leave him and he felt relieved. He had never been angry at anyone before, and he did not know how to use his anger. He went again into the kitchen and stood in front of his wife. She stood up when he came in and began to breathe quickly as she faced her husband. Pooch remembered he had no clothes in his hands. He said, "I'm going to stay home after all."

Alice Ritter drew her arm back and slapped Pooch directly in the face. He did not move his head but received the blow without wincing. He said, "I don't think that you would be able to get along if I left after all. I think that you should know that. I'm going in and go to bed now. I'll get up in the morning."

He went again to the bedroom and took off his clothes. He folded them deliberately and hung them across the chair. Then he lay down between the clean sheets and closed his eyes. He did not listen for the sound of the light switch in the kitchen.

PARKER TYLER:

The Film: Revival of the Matriarchic Spirit

The modern arts have not been poor in acquainting us with the recrudescence of matriarchic ideas more or less in connection with the Oedipus-complex. In *The Infernal Machine,* Jean Cocteau recreated the tragic idea of *Oedipus Rex* with elaborate emphasis on the role of the Sphinx. His Sphinx is a female devil, the extant beast of physical and moral corruption, even of death, which every young man must conquer as a threat. Because the hero must triumph inwardly as well as over material temptations, the Sphinx appears as a lovely young girl, or lust personified. She is, precisely, the witch-like lure of the beast-god, Anubis. But in Cocteau's ambiguous design she is also the virgin destined to entice young men — benignly and not malignly — from the incest situation. As we know, even Oedipus as the wandering hero, the dragon-slayer, cannot avoid the incest peril because of his unique destiny in the tragic pattern, which Cocteau preserves.

The forfeit of life for those who do not guess the Sphinx's riddle reminds us of the Oriental legend of the princess whose hand had to be won through performing a feat or guessing a riddle. Anubis, then, is also an image of the legendary king-father who puts the unsuccessful suitor to death according to precedent. ". . . my thread coils round you," chants the Sphinx to Oedipus, "with the volubility of honey falling upon honey." These are the legitimate love coils surrender to which, if he but knew it, would rescue Oedipus from half his unknown crime. Cocteau's Sphinx knows as little of Oedipus' double crime as he knows until, having given away the answer to him, she is told by Anubis that she is no other than Nemesis, goddess of vengeance. To keep the tragic pattern and yet show the Sphinx as a young girl desirous of Oedipus' love, Cocteau had to give her two personalities. Vengeance is the attribute of the Furies, mercy is Minervan; these emotions of the Sphinx qualify each other in seizing on Oedipus. In freeing him through what seems a sublime personal love, the Sphinx actually frees him to commit the second half of his crime. That Cocteau reserves the vision of justice for the matriarchic figure and denies Oedipus even his demonic wisdom is a point whose general significance reappears in his recent film, *The Storm Within (Les Parents Terribles).*

Both this and Vittorio De Sica's recent film, *Bicycle Thief (Ladri di Bicyclettes),* bring to the screen notable examples of the revival of the matriarchic spirit. The presence of the female fortune-teller in De Sica's film arises circumstantially from the rapid post-war growth of this ancient institution in Italy. It seems justifiable to speculate, therefore, that its source is a reaction felt in the depths of the Italian people, and confirmed by De Sica through Bartolini's novel, against the failure of the combined patriarchic symbols of church and state (the Pope and Mussolini) to have created a prosperous destiny for the nation; thus, plausibly, the seeress has a precise function in the film's artistic plan. Organized labor, church, and police, fail to provide effective aid in the hero-worker's search for his stolen bicycle; these institutions are inutile, indifferent, or actually obstructive.

In the long-term sense the old-fashioned gypsy fortune-teller (still with us everywhere) is but a degraded vestige of the antique principle of female wisdom, a vaguely discernible elision of the Furies, the Sphinx, the Gorgons, the Fates, Diotima, Sephira (or Sophia), and Athena. Socrates accepted Diotima's answers to his questions with the implicit psychological credulity with which today one might accept the words of a clairvoyante. And of Madame Sosostris, the fortune-teller in *The Waste Land,* Eliot says that she "is known to be the wisest woman in Europe." In view of the whole poem, his irony seems not altogether flippant. Part of the furor against the sibylline manner of Gertrude Stein, as well as part of the worship she received from young artists, was owing undoubtedly to the combination of her rather abstract maternal image and the quasi-mystical nature of her utterances. Moreover, the confused homage paid by the poet Yeats, and the unqualified devotion of other men as well as women, to the seeress Madame Blavatsky, existed side by side with hostile criticism of her by scientists and proper snubbing by the legitimate church. An exemplar of the professional medium appears in Noel Coward's *Blithe Spirit* (play and movie) as a comic image. But this role, if acted so overwhelmingly as it was by Margaret Rutherford, has an odd power to evoke transcendental feelings apart from the film's hocus-pocus surface. Madame Arcati, the medium, becomes a witch of traditional, authentic cast when she uncovers the mediumistic housemaid and finally exorcises the ghosts. This scene speaks of sinister depths in the human spirit as well as of the magic power peculiarly associated with women since the Middle Ages.

The struggle of patriarchic authority against matriarchic rebellion fills history, myth, and literature. Mozart's *Magic Flute* provides a

distinct echo of the old sexual hostility for divine supremacy. Its Freemason motif places the patriarchic idea in a fluid, unofficial realm of popular imagination, and reflects the actual domestic situation in which often the ruling parent of the two must be decided. The opera's matriarch, Queen of the Night, is inevitably brought to submission by the temple priest, Sarastro, though not before she flaunts her demonism in competition with his benignity. It was natural for Merejkowski, the author of *The Romance of Leonardo da Vinci,* to depict Leonardo, patriarch of the emergent scientific spirit, as a symbol of white magic opposed to the black magic of a witch. Carl-Theodor Dreyer, the Danish film-maker, has recorded two imaginative, stylistically differing studies of the priesthood's struggle against witches: *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (1928) and *Day of Wrath* (1943). *The Scarlet Letter,* of which there have been two American screen versions, embodies the same tradition in American literature.

De Sica's seeress in *Bicycle Thief* is the witch rendered benign and surviving largely by pressure from the primitive masses; not at all a society professional, she is actually a simple woman of the humble class. Cocteau's obscurely domestic matriarch is a "gypsy" only symbolically. As a naturalistic drama with clever underpinnings of symbolism, *The Storm Within* is about the crisis in an ingrown middle-class family precipitated when the only child, a boy, falls in love with a girl who turns out to be his father's mistress. The older man has sought his affair in the normal course of a cooling conjugal love as well as, more specifically, because of the utter absorption of his wife in their son. The mother's sister, a onetime fiancée of the father, is domiciled with the three of them as friend of the family. The action concerns how the elderly trio is determined to frustrate the son's intention of marrying the girl (whose connection with his father is first known only to his aunt), and then how, moved by the spectacle of the lovers' grief, the aunt persuades the parents to revoke the conspiracy and admit to the young pair the fraud that has been imposed on them. When the lovers are dramatically brought together again, all seems about to culminate happily when the mother, unnoticed, slips away and swallows poison. Her deathbed scene, unexpectedly moving, turns the sophisticated comedy into a transcendent tragedy, of which certain preparatory signs have not been lacking.

The intimate scenes between mother and son are as obvious to the casual eye as Hamlet's closet scene with Gertrude as played in Olivier's film. But the son in Cocteau's film, with his forthright, romping, childish temperament, seems innocent of incest motivation;

in fact, the female members of this family are clearly wiser than the males: *they* are the really ingrown ones. But unlike *Hamlet, The Storm Within* lacks a positive atmosphere of guilt. Every "guilty" impulse in it has been neatly absorbed into common types of neurosis, whose homey edges Cocteau has been at pains to gild with his witty dialogue. The dialogue is nuanced to show, for instance, the conventional degree of consciousness which a contemporary mother, morbidly fixated on her son, may secretly and, as it were, decently attain.

For once a rather familiar situation among civilized beings is exhibited in an artistic spectacle without obliging the spectator to hesitate in deciding how much the people really know of themselves and each other, and how much the author may have allowed them, through misguided tact or tactic, to *seem* to know. Cocteau's characters (the triumph is not too minor) seem to know what they really know, no more and no less. But the poet Cocteau knows something more than they do without allowing them to learn it in the film's duration except in the most oblique sense. The mother and her sister are just conscious enough of their inner motives to justify the symbolism, which as a result does not appear artificial. In her supreme moment of crisis the mother, after her husband and sister have persuaded her to give up her son to the girl, suddenly becomes clairvoyant. A door has slammed; they think the boy has left the apartment, but the mother declares he is looking for sugar in the kitchen; she repeats his every movement aloud and as she announces that he is about to open the door and appear, he does so, munching a lump of sugar. The character and tension of this scene prepare the audience for her suicide and its subtle revelation of passion and tragedy.

The stricken woman explains her act by telling the other four, including the girl, that they looked so satisfied as a group she did not feel herself necessary to their happiness. It is the fatalistic note of a self-doomed personality and a final realization of that rhetorical threat of suicide with which the family is but too well acquainted. The mother's death is arranged like certain violent and sudden trances of mediums except that the human faculties, both earthly and "unearthly," are now annihilated. Ironically she has displayed a serious example of that clairvoyance of which mothers playfully boast to their children so as to establish the hegemony of their wisdom, and which obviously has been an element in the relations between this mother and son: she experiences "second sight."

Cocteau has not omitted crying clues to the explication of his climax. Not the least important but one easily neglected is the son's

personal nickname for his mother: *Sophie;* that is, the legendary name of divine female wisdom, Sophia or Sephira. The unkempt household is nicknamed "the Caravan" and the mother refers to herself as a gypsy. As the camera recedes from the deathbed in the final shot, Cocteau's own voice is heard intoning that gypsies have no home on earth: "The Caravan moves on!" The prominent lack of appreciation suffered by this movie was certainly not caused by the film-maker's lack of consideration for his audience. He meant to present a naturalistic Jocasta as a matriarch who relives the religious destiny of her sex, feeling fated in this era to yield to the patriarchic conspiracy; in substance, this means the present custom of the male's initiative in perpetuating the human family. Similarly, as a timeless personality rather than the protagonist of Sophocles' tragedy, Cocteau's young Oedipus has to obey the sexual law and in turn become a "Laius." The actual Laius of this tragedy is not in himself strong enough to cope with the matriarchic magic of his wife; he has been made an unsuccessful inventor, that is, an "amateur" in modern patriarchic magic. To win out for the present system he has required the aid of the presiding spirit of the plot, his wife's sister, the Minervan friend of the family. It has been she who invented the idea for separating the lovers and she who initiated the merciful exposure of the fraud. Like Athena in the climax of the Orestes trilogy by Aeschylus, she formulates the play's philosophy of justice. Of course, Cocteau's human subtlety has motivated her also with revenge against her sister for originally stealing her fiancé.

We should not overlook Cocteau's exact implication with regard to the surviving matriarchic spirit. The wisdom of the mother's climactic illumination is that, in rebelling against the dominant system, the matriarchic spirit creates disorder and usually acts in vain. The better course is precisely Aeschylean: the Furies in wife and mother should quiet their passion, whatever its cause, and the mother-wife should become Minervan, be serene and poised as the father-husband's obedient partner rather than his rival for authority over the male child. The *mère terrible* in Cocteau's film seems to yield to her husband in form what she refuses to grant in substance; all the more interesting her supreme moment of self-abnegation which, proud and egoistic though it is, implies the objective judgment that her sister would have made him the more practical kind of wife — and she will, indeed, from now on.

This judgment by the self-doomed mother is an apotheosis of gnomic wisdom. Like the purer example of the seeress in De Sica's

film, Cocteau's anachronistic matriarch is sibylline in the mediumistic sense, and as did the pagan priestess, she habitually takes a drug. It might be supposed that the fortune-teller in *Bicycle Thief* is introduced merely for local color or perhaps (since the worker's wife has employed her to foretell if her husband will get a job) to show how silly and futile a woman may be. But the film's testimony amply proves such suppositions wrong. The correct prediction that the job will materialize is only the beginning of the seeress' role. The bicycle necessary for the job is stolen on the worker's first trip into the field. The long, gruelling search for it finally comes to nothing; the worker, who has previously scorned the fortune-teller, now visits her in a kind of bewildered, numb despair. Their interview is brilliantly managed. The seeress' answer to the question whether the stolen bicycle will be recovered, while succinct, is as cryptic as sometimes were the answers of the Pythian Priestess herself. It is: "You will find it right away or not at all." When the worker professes that he doesn't understand, she will only repeat the same words.

Quite unenlightened, the worker walks out vaguely with his little boy, and the first sight he meets on the street is the loitering figure of the bicycle thief, without the bicycle. He gives him precipitate chase, finally collaring him, but is now threatened and bullied by the thief's neighborhood pals. A policeman advises the frantic worker that no case exists against the culprit whom both the audience and the worker have identified beyond doubt. He starts for home and is tempted, while waiting for a bus, to steal a bicycle he sees leaning against an isolated doorway. The dramatic fatality of the bicycle's image here has been superbly approached by the director. After a brief inner struggle, the worker gives way to his impulse and pedals furiously away on the stolen machine, but becoming involved with pedestrians leaving a stadium he is overtaken almost instantly and seized by an angry crowd, who rough and insult him. But the bicycle's owner decides not to press a charge. This time the worker really starts for home with his little boy. The movie fades out as they merge with other pedestrians.

It seems to me that this ending, beautifully managed as it is, would be only half as effective, and lack a clue to its essential meaning, were it not for the fortune-teller and the exact text of her second prophecy. Curiously enough, this text is literally fulfilled in the traditional cryptic manner. What the worker finds at once is the thief but not the bicycle. We are to assume that he never finds the bicycle if only because it has virtually been established that it was sold and taken apart

shortly after being snatched. It is true that the bicycle which he himself steals might have turned out to be, by miraculous coincidence, his own. This would be a nominally divine sort of good fortune, yet as with the oracles of Oedipus' time, De Sica's seeress does not bother in this case with the recovery of stolen articles but with the realization and the recovery of the spirit. The film's climax has been taken generally as having a social message: the common worker is more or less helpless under the present system, and fortune-tellers cannot rescue him from real dilemmas. But luckily De Sica and his collaborators are profounder than to have desired such a simple, superficial content.

The enigma of the prophecy is to be solved by noticing that the worker finds the bicycle thief, loses him, and then, himself becoming a bicycle thief, takes his place. Thus fulfilling the seeress' words, he does regain the bicycle "right away," but symbolically through impersonating its thief. But as his own bicycle *immorally* became the original thief's, it is immorally that the bicycle he proceeds to steal becomes his. The law of personal property supersedes this way of fighting theft with theft. The Furies of vengeance have spoken in the worker as they spoke in Orestes, who paid back murder with murder, and they have further spoken in the spontaneous rage of the crowd that pounces on the worker as he flees. It is the universal fury of mankind with a grievance but it is not the high form of civilized justice. Balance is immediately restored in the Aeschylean manner by the bicycle-owner's "Minervan" pardon of the worker, who receives his spiritual apotheosis through the grace of this instruction by example.

The film-makers have invented nothing to show us this fact dynamically through the personal aspect of the worker, but I think his natural inarticulateness has been replaced by the nobility of the plot, across which falls the ancient, benevolent shadow of the presiding matriarch, the fortune-teller. As Athena, she casts the deciding vote for Apollo, the worker's implicit patron, who represents the beauty of a moral truth: man's labor of universal guilt. Orestes, by killing his mother, the mariticide, assumed her guilt. The worker, by stealing a bicycle, assumes the guilt of the original bicycle thief. As, with his little boy, he gets lost in the crowd, one senses about him the unseen glow of his inward enlightenment.

As Cocteau romantically and symbolically suggests that the incest feud be dissolved, if necessary, by the inspired act of its chief motive-force (here the *mère terrible*), *Bicycle Thief* suggests, in more realistic mood, that the economic feud among the underprivileged is a total

loss, a matter of dog-eat-dog. Lesser films might conceivably contain or suggest the same social messages. What makes these exceptionally eloquent examples of their medium is the form each has been given, and this form in each case is notable for *two* reasons: the use of the matriarchic role as survival of an occult wisdom and the manipulation of the old tragic plot of criminal guilt. In Cocteau's film the gypsy-matriarch is in the center of the action, its veritable vortex; the Minervan matriarch, her sister, is subsidiary but potent. In De Sica's film, the matriarchic spirit is a symbolic embodiment, the fortune-teller, who has somewhat the role of a priestess or chorus. The common keynote of the matriarchs is second-sight: a divination of fate unavailable to ordinary perceptions. This use of spiritual intuition should be taken, I believe, as a healthy sign in a milieu inclined (through the movies as through other media) to place far too much faith in surface facts and the mere pictorial image.

The two films that have formed the nucleus of my theme, as a matter of fact, by no means exhaust the contemporary symptoms. Cocteau's chief revision in adapting his *Orpheus* as the currently seen film was the strength of the role he gave Death, who is a woman. At the moment in New York a public controversy continues over *The Miracle,* a brief film by Rossellini which has been selected as a "best" for 1950 by the New York critics but whose exhibition is stiffly opposed by religious groups. This tale of a goat-girl who imagines her illegitimate child has been immaculately given her by a saint, and is thereon cast out of her village, is obviously the old legend of the devil-visited witch revamped to give it a sacred atmosphere. Aside from the extraneous problem of social conduct, its mythic and symbolic emphasis is securely in line with the matriarchic revival. We are naturally reminded, in this connection, that the Roman Church admitted the Virgin into godhead in 1950, and that *The Miracle* was not banned in Italy where implicitly it has the Pope's approval. Another current movie, *The Mudlark,* pays a spectacular tribute to the queen-mother Victoria, placing opposite her a little boy whose dream is to sit for a moment on the throne. Imagine a reversal of sexes in this situation and you will see how much more readily acceptible, on an esthetic-mythic basis, is the royal person as female.

During the current theatre season in New York, several plays have unambiguously exploited the matriarchic theme. If the musical, *Call Me Madam,* is a political joke at the expense of a matriarchic delusion, it is nevertheless a valuable symptom, inasmuch as positive and negative faceting of a trend precisely establishes its viability. At the

opposite extreme is Lorca's *House of Bernarda Alba,* staged by ANTA for two weeks on its subscription program. This play, like the same author's *Yerma,* represents, among Lorca's variations on the fertility ritual, the dissident inwardness of a virgin-cult. The ruthlessness of the matriarch, Bernarda, who turns her manless house into a nunnery, leads to the suicide of her youngest daughter. Jean Anouilh's *Ring Around the Moon* pivots on the presence of a rich, worldly-wise old matron who finally sets in order, like a dea ex machina, the confused romances of the young people. This play, and Jean Giraudoux's more successful *Madwoman of Chaillot* of the previous season, present the matriarchic image equally on an inspired, not to say illuminated or possessed, level. So the farcical destruction of the reigning patriarchy by Giraudoux's madwoman inevitably absorbs, through its special texture, the poetry of a revival of matriarchic "magic."

To visualize Cocteau's possessed matriarch, Sophie, is again to identify a dually symbolic and realistic image, and in this case one created by an artistic intelligence presumably as intimate as any other with the profounder vibrations of the *zeitgeist.* All of which is not to make a judgment of these filmic and extra-filmic symptoms as necessarily portentous. At the same time, the announcement by De Sica and Savattini, his collaborator, that their next film is to be orientated to *the fabulous,* coincides with the image of the seeress in *Bicycle Thief* as symbolically relevant. As a kind of pilgrim's-progress or initiation-rite, *Bicycle Thief* is already instinct with the fabulous; its humble fortune-teller parallels those disguised fairy-godmothers who watched over heroes in the old *contes.*

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